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U.S. Department of Justice

Federal Bureau of Investigation

Washington, D. C. 20535

MAY 15 2000

Mr. Ernie Lazar
Post Office Box 423434
San Francisco, CA 94142

Subject of Request: Mississippi State Sovereignty
Commission

FOIA NO.: 905419/190-HQ-1250177

HQ + Jack

Dear Requester:

Enclosed are copies of documents from FBI records. Excisions have been made to protect information exempt from disclosure pursuant to Title 5, United States Code, Section 552 (Freedom of Information Act) and/or Section 552a (Privacy Act). In addition, where excisions were made, the appropriate exempting subsections have been cited opposite the deletions. Where pages have been withheld in their entirety, a deleted page information sheet has been substituted showing the reasons or basis for the deletion. The subsections cited for withholding information from the enclosed documents are marked below:

Section 552

- ☐ (b)(1)
- ☒ (b)(2)
- ☐ (b)(3)
- ☐ (b)(4)
- ☐ (b)(5)
- ☒ (b)(6)

Section 552a

- | | |
|---|---------------------------------|
| ☐ (b)(7)(A) | ☐ (d)(5) |
| ☐ (b)(7)(B) | ☐ (j)(2) |
| ☒ (b)(7)(C) | ☐ (k)(1) |
| ☒ (b)(7)(D) | ☐ (k)(2) |
| ☐ (b)(7)(E) | ☐ (k)(3) |
| ☐ (b)(7)(F) | ☐ (k)(4) |
| ☐ (b)(8) | ☐ (k)(5) |
| ☐ (b)(9) | ☐ (k)(6) |
| | ☐ (k)(7) |

(See Form OPCA-16a, enclosed, for an explanation of these exemptions.)

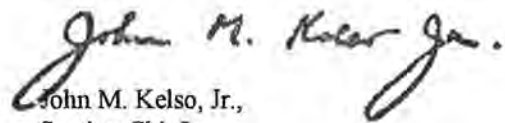
Pursuant to your request, 49 pre-processed pages are being released.

The documents responsive to your request were previously processed for another requester. In order to provide the information you requested as soon as possible, we have released the FBI information as it was originally processed. We have not contacted other Government agencies concerning their information in FBI files.

- ☒ If you desire, you may appeal any denials contained herein. Appeals should be directed in writing to the Co-Director, Office of Information and Privacy, U.S. Department of Justice, Flag Building, Suite 570, Washington, D.C. 20530-0001 within sixty days from receipt of this letter. The envelope and the letter should be clearly marked "Freedom of Information Appeal" or "Information Appeal." Please cite the FOIPA number assigned to your request so that it may be easily identified.
- ☒ See additional information which follows.

This release is all of the Pre-processed material concerning the Mississippi Sovereignty Commission. This release includes the material processed from the Jackson Field Office. This material was processed in 1989 for Erle Ennis Johnston.

Sincerely yours,



John M. Kelso, Jr.,
Section Chief
Freedom of Information-
Privacy Acts Section
Office of Public and
Congressional Affairs

Enclosures (2)

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION
FREEDOM OF INFORMATION/PRIVACY ACTS SECTION
COVER SHEET

SUBJECT: MISSISSIPPI STATE SOVEREIGNTY
COMMISSION

CROSS REFERENCES

Air of Uncertainty Surrounds State Sovereignty Commission

By JOHN HERBERS
United Press Staff Correspondent

A powerful new state agency, the Sovereignty Commission for maintaining segregation, is being organized under a cloud of uncertainty.

That is because nobody has ever done before what it has set out to do, and because it has such far-reaching and strange objectives.

The commission has committed itself to being a watchdog of the state's pattern of racial segregation, a legal advisor to the Legislature, a secret investigator to spy on integration forces, a strong legal arm against integration forces and a general investigating body.

There's nothing else like it anywhere and because of its newness commission members can't agree among themselves how certain objectives should be tackled.

To By-pass Court

The commission was authorized by the recent Legislature as a successor to the Legal Education Advisory Committee which mapped the state's network of laws to avoid enforcement of the Su-

preme Court's anti-segregation decisions.

But administration and legislative leaders, most of them now members of the commission, decided there should be an all-inclusive group to assert the state's sovereignty in compliance with its new interposition resolution and accompanying laws.

The commission was formed under Gov. J. P. Coleman and given \$250,000 to spend in the next two years.

To date the commission has hired an executive secretary, a chief investigator, a publicity man and secretarial help. It is looking around for a full-time attorney and other personnel.

Gore in Charge

As executive secretary, State Rep. Ney Gore will administer the show under policies established by the commission. He will travel outside the state when needed, acting as liaison with other states in the segregation fight. Gore, however, was no sooner chosen than administration opposi-

(See AIR on Page 2A)

THE STATE TIMES
JACKSON, MISS.

5/27/56

Page 1, Col. 2 & 3

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Air . . .

ents brought up charges Gore could not hold that job and be a legislator too. Coleman brushed off the charges as unfounded.

The commission wants a full-time attorney to work with the attorney general in court fights against suits filed on integration.

Members expect Negroes to file the first of such suits within the next few weeks but there has been nothing said about what the full-time attorney would do with his time if no suit is filed for several more months. At least one man who was offered the job rejected it.

Then comes the intelligence division to be headed by L. C. Hicks, present highway patrol chief. He has been voted authority to hire whatever secret investigators and informers Coleman thinks are needed to spy on the enemy and find out Negro plans for getting in what schools.

If the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People plan to file suit, Coleman said, the commission should know about it ahead of time. Then, when it happens, Hicks will send out his men to find out if any of the Negroes involved have violated any of the assortment of laws drawn up as another legal weapon against integration.

Backing up this plan is the Sovereignty Commission law giving the agency broad powers to subpoena witnesses and records, with fines and jail terms for those who violate the law.

Not the least of the commission's functions is its proposed advertising and publicity program, under direction of Editor Hal Dcelle of Rolling Fork. A good share of the \$250,000 is expected to go for this phase of the program.

Mississippi will set out to show the nation that the state, as Coleman puts it, "doesn't fry Negroes and eat them for breakfast."

There is yet to be established a means of spreading this publicity, but the general idea seems to be to work through the smaller newspapers of the North and run any advertisements necessary to combat NAACP ads attacking the state.



UNCONSTITUTIONAL AGAIN

A front page editorial in the Scott County Times, edited by Erle Johnston, charges that the State Sovereignty Commission is an illegal body; that its members seek to hold offices created by the legislature of which they are members, and that is in violation of the constitution.

Editor Johnson contends that the selection of Ney Gore, of Quitman county, as executive director of the body is also unconstitutional; that he is not eligible for any other office until his term as a legislator has expired. The position pays \$1,200 per year. Mr. Gore has not yet accepted.

"When Mr. Gore takes the oath he becomes a member of the executive department, despite any careful wordage about being an employee," says Editor Johnston.

Gol darn it! Here we are facing another complicated legal problem, just at a time when hot weather is on the doorstep and we should not be doing any worrying.

Well, maybe we had better not worry too much.

The State Sovereignty Commission was created to do battle against an unconstitutional act of the United States Supreme Court. Why not consider it even-Steven, fifty-fifty, and let it go at that?

And, as Buck Kilgore once said to President Cleveland:

"Aw, hell, Grover! What's the constitution between friends?"



SECRET PROBERS SOUGHT IN MISS.

Check on Integration Moves Is Planned

(The Times-Picayune Capital Bureau)
JACKSON, Miss., May 15 —
The state sovereignty commission Tuesday authorized hiring secret investigators as "eyes and ears" to keep tab on possible integration moves in Mississippi.

The group, formed by the legislature to continue the state's legal strategy for circumventing racial integration, also agreed to use paid informers, some of them Negroes, in order to gather information.

At the recommendation of Gov. J. P. Coleman, the commission named Chief L. C. Hicks, now chief of state highway patrolmen, as chief investigator, and handed Coleman authority to name other part-time investigators whose identity will be kept secret.

The action of the group hiring Chief Hicks in the new post confirmed reports that Coleman planned to move the veteran highway patrol official from the No. 2 post in the patrol organization.

Meanwhile, the commission named state Rep. Ney Gore, Marks, as its full-time executive director at \$7200 a year.

And the commission agreed to employ Hal Decell, editor of the Meric Creek Pilot, Rolling Fork, to become publicity director to plan a large-scale information campaign which the commission proposes.

Decell, recommended for the job by Gov. Coleman, served as Coleman's publicity manager during his successful campaign last summer. The commission agreed to offer Decell \$6500 to take the post.

THE TIMES-PICAYUNE
NEW ORLEANS, LA.
MAY 15 1960
Sec. Col.

Mississippi Segregation Board Will Hire 'Spies'

JACKSON, Miss., May 16 (AP)—Mississippi's State Sovereignty Commission, watchdog of the State's rights, has voted to hire secret agents to serve as "eyes and ears" in the fight to keep segregation.

Along the same lines, the 12-member commission voted yesterday to spend State money to "buy information" about activities in the integration camp.

In another move, the commission hired a full-time publicity director to explain to integrationists Mississippi's position concerning segregation. "an official arm of State government."

The action was part of what the Governor cautioned the commission not to panic. "I see no reason for alarm, frustration or rutility," he said. "We have the ball and it's up to the opposition to take the initiative."

The commission was set up by the 1956 Legislature to prevent Federal "encroachment" on States' rights with the segregation question as the main objective. "After all, integration came about because the people gave up. We will not give up."

In debating the issue of hiring undercover agents, the Sovereignty Commission agreed on secrecy because, among other reasons "it's possible we may want to hire a Negro" to spy on Negro activities within Mississippi.

Gov. Coleman called attention to the FBI's use of informants and said the SSC would operate in the same manner. He called the investigators and informants, known but to the commission,

Wash. Post and Times Herald _____
Wash. News _____
Wash. Star 01 _____
N. Y. Herald Tribune _____
N. Y. Mirror _____
N. Y. Daily News _____
Daily Worker _____
The Worker _____
New Leader _____

Date MAY 16 1956

State To Hire Secret Racial Investigators

Probers To Aid In Fight To Preserve Segregation; Group May Include Negro

By PHIL STROUPE

The State Sovereignty Commission Tuesday voted to employ secret investigators as "an official arm of state government" who would "serve as the eyes and ears" in the state's fight against racial integration.

Gov. J. P. Coleman, chairman of the 12-member group created to assure continued racial segregation, told the commission that plans approved by it today "will bring this commission into its full effect and fruition."

To carry out its work, the Commission elected a full time executive director, a director of publicity and "such investigators as the chairman may deem necessary" to prepare the state's course of action against court suits to end segregation.

"We are not a beleaguered state with our backs to the wall," Coleman said. "I see no reason for alarm, frustration or futility. We've got the ball and its up to the opposition to take the initiative."

Chief Hicks Hired

The Commission voted to hire

Chief L. C. Hicks of Highway Patrol to head the investigative force that will serve as the "intelligence corps" against the enemy camp.

"Chief Hicks is a former sheriff, a job such as this there just and if he doesn't know how to handle it isn't one in the state who does."

Gov. Coleman was authorized, as chairman of the Commission, "to employ such other investigators at salaries commensurate with their duties and responsibilities" to assist Chief Hicks. Hicks' salary would remain the same as it is with the Highway Patrol.

The Commission elected Rep. Ney Gore of Marks as its full-time executive director at a salary of \$7,200 a year. Gore, who served as secretary of the old Legal Education Advisory Committee, would be the mainspring of the Commission. "He would be the correlator of our operations," Coleman said, "with full authority to travel and represent the commission."

Decell Publicity Director

Hal Decell, editor of the Deer Creek Pilot at Rolling Fork and publicity director for Gov. Coleman in the 1955 campaign, was elected director of publicity at a maximum salary of \$6,500 a year.

In addition, the Commission voted to employ Mrs. Stella Parham, former LEAC stenographer, as the chief clerical assistant for the Commission at \$275 a month.

Attorney Hugh Clayton of New Albany suggested that one of the investigators to be employed by the commission "might even be a Negro."

House Speaker Walter Sillers and W. S. Henley of Hazlehurst, constitutional law experts, suggested that the identity of the "investigators", be kept secret.

The Commission authorized the field men "to spend what money is necessary to acquire the information" needed to thwart efforts of integration.

The Commission was given a \$250,000 appropriation by the legislature to accomplish its work.

Sen. Earl Evans Jr. of Canton emphasized the "vital and important role of the investigators."

Need Friends

As the director of publicity, Henley said, "We need to win friends outside the South, and an expert will be required for that job."

JACKSON DAILY NEWS
JACKSON, MISS.

15/56

Page 1 Cols. 7 & 8

The Commission did not employ a legal advisor but all of its 12 members are lawyers and the need for legal advice can for the time being be found within its own ranks.

Gov. Coleman named a three-member steering committee composed of Evans, Henley, and Atty. Gen. Joe T. Patterson to make policy to submit to the full commission.

Other members present were: A. Gov. Carroll Gartin, Sen. Wilbur Burgin of Columbus, Reps. Joe Hopkins of Clarksdale, W. H. Johnson of Decatur, George Payne Bossar of Charleston and George Thornton of Kosciusko.

Sovereignty Unit Votes to Employ

Hicks as Prober Counter-Attack On Integration

By JOHN HERBERS
United Press Staff Correspondent

The State Sovereignty Commission today authorized W. J. P. Coleman to hire secret investigators and informants to "get all the facts" from the enemy camp in the segregation fight.

The commission, Mississippi's official segregation watchdog, voted to hire Highway Patrol chief L. C. Hicks to head counter-intelligence activities against forces seeking racial integration.

"Whenever there is a petition filed for integration," Coleman said, "we will want to see what the basis is to it."

The organization also would keep an eye on what Coleman called "clandestine meetings" of Negro groups seeking integration, such as the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People and the regional council of Negro leadership.

Hicks would send out investigators to interview persons involved in integration moves in the courts "to get all the facts for a counter-attack." The commission left it up to Coleman to decide how many men to hire to help Hicks and gave him freedom to spend a

"reasonable" amount for paid informants.

House Speaker Walter Sillers suggested that the identity of Hicks' assistants be kept secret and the commission agreed. Attorney Hugh Clayton of New Albany suggested that one of the investigators "might be a Negro." The commission hired State Rep. Ney Gore of Quitman County as its executive director at a salary of \$7,200 a year and voted to offer the job as full-time pub-

(See PROBER on Page 8A)

Prober...

licity man to Hal DeCell of Rolling Fork, editor of the Deer Creek Pilot, at \$6,500.

In Rolling Fork, DeCell said "possibilities are that I will accept" if the post is offered him, but he added he had not as yet been formally notified of his selection.

"I think the post itself could be of great service to Mississippi, and I think it could also be effective in winning friends across the nation," said DeCell.

DeCell, who is 31, served as director of publicity for Gov. Coleman's gubernatorial campaign last summer.

He said his wife would take over operation of the Deer Creek Pilot should he leave his editor's post. The newspaper has received state and national journalism awards.

DeCell, a native of Vicksburg, attended the University of Alabama and the University of Mississippi, is a former commercial artist and professional musician and made three round-the-world trips during his service with the Merchant Marine from 1943 to 1947, including 42 months of sea duty.

JACKSON, MISS.
7/15/56

Oct. 1 Page 1 A Col. *

Hicks would move from the highway patrol at his present salary. The group postponed hiring a full-time attorney to map legal defense against integration efforts because the unidentified lawyer the commission had decided or rejected the offer.

Coleman reminded the commission that the NAACP had said it could file its first suit for school integration in Mississippi in June. When suits or petition are filed against a school district, he said, investigators would start to work gathering information on the people involved for use in drawing up court procedures. He suggested that they also would look for any violation of new state laws like on prohibiting fomenting agitation to break down the state's laws and customs.

The publicity man would conduct an advertising and publicity campaign in the north to "give the nation the real facts" about Mississippi. A swing in public opinion favorable to southern customs would be the long-range goal.

The commission, created by the recent session of the Legislature, has given \$250,000 to spend over a two-year period as it sees fit toward maintaining segregation. It has also given broad powers to subpoena witnesses and examine documents.

Coleman appointed a subcommittee composed of Attorney General E. Patterson, Attorney W. S. Henry of Hazlehurst and Sen. Earl Mans of Canton to supervise setting up the commission's working organization, which will be headed

Gore, a Marks attorney. Gore is secretary to the old legal education advisory committee which helped Mississippi's main defense against school integration.

Sovereignty Commission Is Organized Here

The State Sovereignty Commission created to fight federal "encroachment" upon state's rights, will organize in Gov. J. P. Coleman's office today.

As governor, Coleman is chairman of the 12-member commission which has authority to spend \$250,000 and to hire whatever assistance it needs.

The commission was created to replace the disbanded Legal Education Advisory Committee which was set up to seek means of evading the U. S. Supreme Court decision outlawing segregation.

But the SSC was given broader authority and may combat any federal law or court decision that tends to reduce the state's powers.

JACKSON DAILY NEWS
JACKSON, MISS.

12/56

sect. 1 Page 1 Col. 8

F B I

Date: 5/16/56

Transmit the following message via AIRTEL

(Priority or Method of Mailing)

From SAC, MEMPHIS

To: DIRECTOR, FBI

CIVIL RIGHTS MATTERS
STATE OF MISSISSIPPI

The following article, datelined May 15, 1956, Jackson, Mississippi, appeared in the May 16, 1956, issue of the "Commercial Appeal," Memphis, Tennessee:

"SPIES WILL AID FIGHT AGAINST INTEGRATION

"MISSISSIPPI PATROL CHIEF TO HEAD SECRET AGENTS"

"Secret investigators and informants will be hired by the State Sovereignty Commission as Mississippi's 'eyes and ears' in its fight against integration.

"Employment of the agents was authorized by the commission meeting Tuesday with Gov. J. P. Coleman, chairman of the 12-member legislative created segregation 'watchdog' group. They will check on maneuvers of those seeking to force integration in Mississippi.

"The investigators will work under Leonard C. Hicks, chief of the State Highway Patrol and former sheriff of Sharkey County, who was hired by the commission to have charge of that program. Mr. Hicks will leave the highway patrol if he accepts the assignment.

"Governor Coleman recommended Mr. Hicks 'because I feel he can get in and get the kind of information we want to be ready for all counter-attacks.'

"When Thurgood Marshall (chief counsel of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People) says a suit is to be filed in Mississippi, I want to find out what there is to it,' Governor Coleman said. 'They will be able to check on those signing the integration petitions and other clandestine actions of those opposed to segregation.'

"It was Speaker Walter Sillers of the House of Representatives who suggested that names of the investigators be kept secret."

NEW ORLEANS requested to furnish full information concerning State Sovereignty Commission.

3 - Bureau
1 - New Orleans
1 - Memphis

Special Agent in Charge

Sent _____ M Per _____

Office Memorandum • UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

TO : Director, FBI
 FROM : SAC, New Orleans
 SUBJECT: CIVIL RIGHTS MATTERS
 STATE OF MISSISSIPPI

DATE: May 29, 1956

Re Memphis airtel to Bureau May 16, 1956, concerning the Mississippi State Sovereignty Commission.

The Mississippi Legal Education Advisory Committee was created by the provisions of Chapter 33 of the Laws of Mississippi, Regular Session of 1954, allegedly for the purpose of seeking means of evading the U. S. Supreme Court decision outlawing segregation in public schools.

This Committee submitted for the consideration of the State Legislature, a proposed amendment to the State Constitution authorizing the State Legislature by a two-thirds vote of each House to abolish the public schools in the State and to enact suitable legislation to effect this and also giving them authority to sell and dispose of all public school buildings.

In September, 1955, a concurrent resolution to this effect was adopted which submitted this proposed amendment to the Constitution to a vote of the people of Mississippi.

In December, 1954, a referendum as to this amendment was submitted to the people of Mississippi and was approved by the necessary majority of votes. In January, 1955, this proposed amendment to the State Constitution was made a part of the Constitution.

During the Regular Legislative Session of 1956, the following bills were introduced by Representative NEY GORE, Secretary of the Mississippi Legal Education Advisory Committee (LEAC) and were allegedly proposed by the LEAC:

House Bill No. 17, which was an act requiring that each superintendent, principal, teacher, etc., shall file with the County Board of Trustees, an affidavit listing the names and addresses of all associations and organizations of which they are a member or to which they have paid dues or

- 2 - Bureau
- 1 - Memphis (Info)
- 1 - New Orleans

[REDACTED]

made contributions within the past five years. It provides that such teachers who do not file such affidavits prior to employment, the making of contract with them shall be null and void and no salaries will be paid to them. It further provides that every person who wilfully files a false affidavit shall be guilty of perjury. This act was approved on February 20, 1956.

House Bill No. 31, which is an act repealing the General Laws of Mississippi regarding compulsory education and which in effect makes attendance at schools in Mississippi non-compulsory. This act was approved February 24, 1956.

House Bill No. 33, which is an act prohibiting the fomenting and agitation of litigation, and to prohibit the solicitation, receipt or donation of funds for the purpose of filing or prosecuting lawsuits.

House Bill No. 34, which is an act which prohibits the use of profane, vulgar, indecent, offensive and slanderous language over a telephone. This act was approved April 5, 1956.

House Bill No. 35, which is an act setting forth the policy of the State of Mississippi in regard to the practice of law and to establish the requirements for admission of attorneys of other states to appeal or plead in any special cause in any court in Mississippi. It is set out that the privilege of appearing before any court in Mississippi is solely within the discretion of the State Board of Bar Admissions and that any attorney from another state who desires to appear in the State of Mississippi shall subject himself to the jurisdiction of the State Board of Bar Admissions.

It provides that this Board may inquire as to the attorney's membership in or financial contributions to any organization during the preceding five years and that they may pass on his fitness to appear in the state. This act was approved April 5, 1956.

[REDACTED]

House Bill No. 13, as previously reported, was a bill introduced for the purpose of abolishing common-law marriages in the State of Mississippi. This bill was not enacted into law; however, Senate Bill No. 1954 was approved on April 5, 1956. This is an act providing that no marriage should be valid unless the contracting parties shall have obtained a marriage license as required by law and unless the marriage shall have been duly performed by an authorized person. It states that failure to comply with the above provision shall render the purported marriage void and any children born as a result thereof, illegitimate.

On March 29, 1956, House Bill No. 880 was approved by the Governor. This was an act creating the State Sovereignty Commission and is allegedly the organization created to take the place of the Mississippi LEAC. The LEAC was a temporary committee and the State Sovereignty Commission is now a permanent committee.

This act is as follows:

"House Bill No. 880

"AN ACT creating the State Sovereignty Commission, prescribing the membership thereof, the methods by which they are to be selected and their terms of service, describing its authority, duties and powers; and for related purposes.

"Be it enacted by the Legislature of the State of Mississippi:

"Section 1. There is hereby created the State Sovereignty Commission, which shall be composed of the following members: The Governor, the Attorney General, the President of the Senate, and Speaker of the House of Representatives, who shall be ex officio members; three (3) citizens who shall be appointed by the Governor, one from each Supreme Court District; two (2) members of the State Senate who shall be appointed by the President of the Senate, and three (3)

[REDACTED]

"members from the House of Representatives who shall be appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives. The Governor, Attorney General, President of the Senate and Speaker of the House of Representatives shall serve from and after the date of passage of this act during the remainder of their terms of office, as such ex officio members; the members of the State Senate and the House of Representatives shall serve from and after the date of their appointment until the expiration of their present terms of office, and the three (3) members appointed by the Governor shall serve during his term of office and their successors shall be appointed in a like manner and serve for a like period. The membership of the State Sovereignty Commission shall be successively composed from term to term in the manner set forth above, and the membership and their successors are clothed with full power and authority conferred upon them by this act, together with any and all other powers necessary to accomplish the purposes of this act.

"Section 2. Each member of the commission, other than the Governor and the Attorney General, shall receive a per diem of twenty dollars (\$20.00) for each day of service rendered in attending meetings or otherwise in the discharge of his duties hereunder, and payment of hotel, meals, and traveling expenses while away from his home for any of the purposes herein. If the member should use his own automobile in travel on business of the commission, he shall be paid six cents (6¢) per mile for each mile traveled.

"All expenditures by or for the commission, out of funds appropriated by the state, shall be paid by the state treasurer upon warrants issued by the auditor of public accounts, which warrants shall be issued upon requisition signed by the chairman of this commission. All funds received from other

[REDACTED]

"sources shall be kept and accounted for and expended in such manner as may be determined by the commission. Full and complete accounting shall be kept and made by the commission for all funds received and expended by it. Representatives of the office of State Auditor of Public Accounts shall annually audit the expenditures of all funds received by the commission from all sources; and the said auditor of public accounts shall make a complete and detailed report of such audits to the legislature.

"Section 3. The Governor shall be chairman of the commission, and the President of the Senate the vice-chairman, with authority to act in the absence of the chairman. The commission may employ a secretary who shall keep a record of the proceedings of the commission and its receipts and disbursements.

"Section 4. Vacancies occurring during any term shall be filled by the successor in office to the Governor, Attorney General, President of the Senate or Speaker of the House of Representatives, each respectively, and other vacancies shall be filled by appointment by the Governor, President of the Senate, and Speaker, each respectively, as the case may be.

"Section 5. It shall be the duty of the commission to do and perform any and all acts and things deemed necessary and proper to protect the sovereignty of the State of Mississippi, and her sister states, from encroachment thereon by the Federal Government or any branch, department or agency thereof; and to resist the usurpation of the rights and powers reserved to this state and our sister states by the Federal Government or any branch, department or agency thereof.

"Section 6. The commission may co-operate with one or more of the states of the Union, or any agency or agencies, commission or commissions thereof, or with any person or persons, corporation or corporations, organization or organizations, and may join with them

[REDACTED]

"or any of them, and pool such of the funds and resources of this commission in carrying out the objectives and purposes of this act as may be deemed necessary and proper by the commission.

"Section 7. It shall be the duty of such commission to keep full and complete minutes and records of all its proceedings and actions, which said minutes and records shall be open to the inspection of any member of the legislature at any reasonable time during the regular hours of a business day.

"Section 8. The said commission is hereby fully authorized and empowered to subpoena and examine witnesses, to require the appearance of any persons and the production of any books, records, papers or documents as evidence, and to order the attendance of any witness or the production of any books, records, papers and documents and, in such cases, the commission shall have the power to issue all necessary process which shall be signed by the chairman, vice-chairman, or secretary of said commission, and shall be directed to the sheriff of any county or to the bailiff or process server of said commission, or the deputy of either. When any such process has been served, obedience thereto may be enforced by the attachment of the persons, papers and records subpoenaed, and if the person should willfully refuse to appear before such commission or to produce any paper or record in obedience to any process issued and served, then the commission shall have authority to enforce obedience thereto by fine or imprisonment in the discretion of the commission.

"Section 9. The chairman, vice-chairman, or secretary of the commission is hereby authorized and empowered to administer oaths to witnesses, and any witness appearing and testifying before said commission who shall willfully and corruptly testify falsely to any material fact shall be guilty of perjury

[REDACTED]

"and shall be subject to prosecution and punishment therefor as provided by law; and if such perjury be manifest, or if the witness shall refuse to testify or produce any books, records, papers or documents, he shall be guilty of contempt of the commission and shall be punished accordingly.

"Section 10. The commission shall have the power and authority to apply to the chancery court of the first judicial district of Hinds County for aid and for the issuance of the proper process to enforce obedience to any process issued by said commission.

"Section 11. Any person sworn and examined as a witness before said commission without procurement or contrivance on his part shall not be held to answer criminally or be subject to any penalty or forfeiture for any fact or act touching which he is required to testify; nor shall any statement made or book, paper or document produced by any such witness be competent evidence in any criminal proceeding against such witness other than for perjury in delivering his evidence. Should any witness refuse to testify to any fact or refuse to produce any book, document or paper touching which he is to be examined, on the ground that he will thereby incriminate himself, or that it will tend to discredit or render him infamous, the commission shall consider such refusal as a part of the evidence and shall inform the public of the refusal of such witness to so testify, and the facts and circumstances under which such refusal was made.

"Section 12. The members of the commission and the duly authorized employees and representatives of the commission shall have the power and authority to examine, during the usual business hours of the day, all records, books, documents and other papers touching upon or concerning the matters and things about which the commission is authorized to conduct an investigation, and the commission shall have the power and authority to require all persons, firms and

[REDACTED]

"corporations having such books, records, documents and other papers in their possession or under their control to produce same within this state at such time and place as the commission may designate, and to permit an inspection and examination thereof by the members of said commission or its authorized representatives and employees. The authority of the commission and its employees to examine such books, records, and papers shall extend to all such books, records, and papers which are required by law to be kept or which are necessary or helpful in conducting investigations. If any person, firm or corporation shall willfully fail or refuse to comply with the provisions of this section, then such person, firm or corporation shall be guilty of a misdemeanor, and upon conviction shall be punished by a fine of not less than one hundred dollars (\$100.00) nor more than one thousand dollars (\$1,000.00), or by imprisonment in the county jail for not more than six (6) months, or by both such fine and imprisonment.

"Section 13. The commission may employ such legal, professional, expert, secretarial, clerical and other help deemed necessary and proper to carry out the objectives and purposes of this act, and is hereby authorized and empowered to fix the compensation of such employees at any reasonable amount, in its discretion, and in addition, to reimburse such employees for expenses incurred in traveling on the business of the commission. The commission may also pay witness fees and mileage to witnesses at the rates now allowed witnesses by law in the circuit court. A full, complete and itemized record shall be kept of all such expenditures. The commission may expend such of its funds deemed necessary for advertisement in any manner or form deemed necessary, and to employ speakers and other persons and agencies wherever deemed necessary and proper to assist this commission in carrying out the objectives and purposes hereof.

"Section 14. The commission is authorized and empowered to receive and expend any funds appropriated

[REDACTED]

"to it by the legislature of this state, and/or received by it from any other sources, in carrying out the objectives and purposes of this act.

"Section 15. The commission is hereby authorized and empowered to receive contributions, donations and gifts of money and/or property from any state, department, agency, commission, or subdivision thereof, and from any person, corporation, or organization, to be expended by it in carrying out the objectives and purposes hereof.

"Section 16. The commission is hereby endowed with full power and authority to do and perform any and all acts and things deemed necessary and proper to carry out the objectives and purposes of this act.

"Section 17. All elective and appointive officers and employees of all state, district, county and municipal offices or political subdivisions thereof, the University of Mississippi and other institutions of higher learning shall co-operate with the commission and render such aid and assistance as may be requested of them by the commission.

"Section 18. If any section, paragraph, sentence, or clause of this act shall be held to be unconstitutional or invalid, the same shall not effect any other part, portion or provision of this act, but such other part shall remain in full force and effect.

"Section 19. This act shall take effect and be in force from and after its passage.

"Approved March 29, 1956."

The "State Times" newspaper of Jackson, Mississippi, on May 15, 1956, reflected that the State Sovereignty Commission on that date authorized Governor J. P. COLEMAN to hire secret investigators and informants to "get the facts" from the enemy camp on segregation. The Commission voted to


hire L. C. HICKS, present Chief of the Mississippi Highway Safety Patrol, to head the counter-intelligence activities against forces seeking racial integration.

Governor COLEMAN is quoted as saying that whenever a petition for integration in the schools is filed, he will want to see what the basis of it is. It was also indicated that the commission would keep an eye on such groups as the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People and the Regional Council of Negro Leadership.

The Commission left it up to Governor COLEMAN how many men to hire to help HICKS and gave him freedom to spend a reasonable amount of money for paid informants. House Speaker WALTER SILLERS, who is on the Commission, suggested that the identity of the investigators be kept secret and the Commission agreed.

The Commission hired HAL DECELL, of Rolling Fork, Mississippi, as Publicity Officer of the Commission, and have also hired a full-time attorney to help in mapping legal defense against integration efforts. Attorney General JOE PATTERSON; attorney W. S. HENLEY, of Hazelhurst; and Senator EARL EVANS, of Canton, Mississippi, were appointed to supervise the setting up of the Commission's organization which will be headed by NEY GORE of Marks, Mississippi.

A total of \$250,000 has been appropriated by the Legislature for this Commission.

Reference is also made to New Orleans letter to Bureau dated March 22, 1956, regarding Senate Bill No. 1870, which states that it is an act to give effect to the resolution of interposition. A copy of this bill has previously been forwarded to the Bureau. It was approved on April 5, 1956.

The above is submitted for your information.

Office Memorandum • UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

TO : DIRECTOR, FBI

DATE: October 28, 1958

FROM: *Purs*
SAC, NEW ORLEANS [REDACTED]SUBJECT: [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

The State Sovereignty Commission, according to news releases, is an agency dedicated to the preservation of segregation, the separation of the races and opposition to violence.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Editorials

The Battle for Minds

White supremacists in the South are engaged in a deliberate battle to win minds in other sections of the country. Tons of literature, smear pamphlets and newspapers, are being mailed to the East, North and West. Some of this evil propagandizing is being done by well-known hate organizations, some by the Ku Klux Klan and some by White Citizens Councils in various Southern states.

This frantic, concerted action should surprise no one. Southerners have always known that they have many "friends" in the rest of the country when race and color are the issue.

However, this new propaganda war against Negroes and democracy has a new and disturbing social and political significance as it is presently being waged. Some Southern states themselves are taking over the propaganda job. In Georgia, there is the tax-supported Georgia Education Commission, and in Mississippi there is the Mississippi State Sovereignty Commission. These agencies use the money of Negro and white taxpayers to try to prove to the rest of the country that every Negro who seeks first-class citizenship status is either a Communist or is backed by a Communist. The Negro's urge to be free and equal is communist, they assert.

Thus they tee off on board members of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People to create an impression of active Communist affiliation or support. In the same manner, they smear Negro college presidents and ministers in the North.

These state agencies propose to go even further. A South Carolina group hopes to float a \$5,000,000 bond issue. With this it will set up a private corporation and try to sell \$100,000,000 worth of stock. And how do they propose to use this vast amount of capital. Well, they think the newspapers, the magazines, the radio and television in the North are against them. So they are going to buy stock in mass communications media in the North so that they can control those media and tell their story.

We would be greatly alarmed by these plans if we were not sure there are TWO MINDS. The Southerner is out to win the mind of the white Northerner.

Pittsburgh, Pa.

PRESS

SUN-TELEGRAPH

POST-GAZETTE

COURIER

Date 12-28-57

Edition New York

Page 5

Column 1 & 2

Author of Article

Editor (on editorials)

Title of Case

67 JAN 22 1958

105-34237-A

God forbid that he should succeed! For there is another and greater mind upon this earth, the mind of the peoples of the world. Just as surely as the Southerner might win the mind of the white Northerner, America would lose the mind (the support and confidence) of the peoples of the world.

These peoples are not all Communist peoples, but their minds are minds America needs as she faces the future. No American can ignore the fact that Africa is the continent of the future. Africa has natural resources vital to America. But Africans who are now fighting off their colonizers are not going to be interested in a nation which demeans and denigrates a human being because he is black.

Thus the propagandists of the South are bound to lose in the long run. Our principal fear is not so much concerned with the extent of the damage the Southern propagandists may cause us, but the extent to which they may harm America.

(Mount Clipping in Space Below)

Anti-Mix Unit Deals Rebuff To Councils

(JACKSON, Miss. (AP)) — The Citizens Council pondered its next move today in the wake of a stiff setback—election of Erle Johnston Jr. of Forest as director of the State Sovereignty Commission.

The commission, headed by Gov. Ross Barnett, voted 6-4 yesterday to name Johnston as director, a move opposed strongly by the Council and 15 women on hand to protest the action.

Barnett announced the vote and noted that he did not cast a ballot, as would have been necessitated by a tie.

A new director for the commission, the state's official segregation watchdog, was needed after Albert Jones of Jackson resigned to run for sheriff of Hinds, the state's most populous county. If he wins, Jones will serve his third term as sheriff.

Johnston, editor of the Scott County Times, agreed to take \$500 less than the \$10,000 per year earned by Jones, Barnett said, and also to continue in his present part time job as commission publicity director, all for the \$9,500 yearly salary.

The commission admitted the women just before it recessed. The women said they were there to press the commission against electing Johnston.

Just before the commissioners emerged, one of the women emerged from the conference room disgruntled. "They elected him before we got in there," she said angrily.

The Citizens Council had apparently wanted Louis Hollis of Jackson, a staff member of the council here, to be elected. Hollis said yesterday, however, that he did not want the job.

Andy Hopkins of Jackson, a commission investigator and former Hinds deputy sheriff, was the only other man nominated for the post. He was favored by the council over Johnston.

Votes against Johnston were cast by state Reps. Wilburn Hooker of Holmes County and Joe [redacted] of Hinds, attorney Aubrey [redacted] and state Sen. John McLaurin of Brandon.

(Indicate page, name of newspaper, city and state.)

Page 19

NEW ORLEANS STATES
ITEM
NEW ORLEANS, LA.

Date: 3/22/63
Edition: Red Flash
Author:
Editor:
Title: Mississippi State
Sovereignty Commission
Jackson, Miss.
Character: RM
or
Classification:
Submitting Office: New Orleans

UPI-52

(RACIAL)

E. GRENADA, MISS.--AN OFFICIAL OF THE MISSISSIPPI SOVEREIGNTY COMMISSION SAID LAST NIGHT THAT SCHOOL SEGREGATION IN THE STATE CAN BE MAINTAINED ONLY THROUGH THE COOPERATION OF NEGROES.

ERLE JOHNSON JR., PUBLIC RELATIONS DIRECTOR OF THE SEGREGATION AGENCY, TOLD GRADUATES OF GRENADA HIGH SCHOOL THAT EXTREMISTS ON BOTH SIDES ARE PREVENTING THAT COOPERATION.

HE SAID THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF COLORED PEOPLE (NAACP) HAS THRIVED ON "STRAINED RELATIONS TO STRENGTHEN THEIR APPEALS FOR MORE FUNDS FROM THE NORTH," AND THAT THE WHITE CITIZENS COUNCILS "BELIEVE IN THREAT AND INTIMIDATION...(AND) HAVE AGITATED THE FRICTION AND BITTERNESS..."

JOHNSON SAID SOME SEGREGATIONISTS, WHILE ARGUING THAT TO 'GIVE UP AN INCH WOULD MEAN EVENTUALLY GIVING UP A MILE,' IGNORE THE FACT THAT NEGROES, WITH THE AID OF FEDERAL COURTS, "SOON MAY BE ABLE TO TAKE THAT MILE WHENEVER THEY PLEASE."

WASHINGTON CAPITAL NEWS SERVICE

Tolson _____
 Belmont ☒
 Mohr _____
 Callahan _____
 Conrad _____
 DeLoach ☒
 Evans _____
 Malone _____
 Rosen ☒
 Sullivan _____
 Tavel _____
 Trotter _____
 Tele. Room _____
 Holmes _____
 Gandy _____

REC 29

o School Integration Memphis

UPI-22

(RACIAL)

MISSISSIPPI SOVEREIGNTY
E. GRENADA, MISS.--AN OFFICIAL OF THE MISSISSIPPI SOVEREIGNTY COMMISSION SAID LAST NIGHT THAT SCHOOL SEGREGATION IN THE STATE CAN BE MAINTAINED ONLY THROUGH THE COOPERATION OF NEGROES.

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SAN FRANCISCO--A RACIAL CONTROVERSY OVER A MUSICAL VERSION OF "MURDER MY MURDER" GREY WARNER TODAY WITH TWO MAJOR NEGRO MINISTERIAL GROUPS AND CALIFORNIA'S LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR ON RECORD AGAINST THE SHOW.

A JOINT MEETING OF THE CIVIC COMMITTEE OF THE BAPTIST MINISTERS' UNION AND THE INTERDENOMINATIONAL MINISTERIAL ALLIANCE YESTERDAY APPROVED A RESOLUTION WHICH DECLARED:

"WE ARE SORRY BY THE REVEREND BISHOP'S SHOWN BY THE SCHOOL DISTRICTS AT GEORGE VANDERBILT HIGH SCHOOL FOR THE VILLAGE AND REPRESENTATIVES OF THE NEGRO PARENTS AND STUDENTS."

THE DISTRICTS' POSITION AGAINST THE SHOW WAS ENDORSED BY LT. GOV. ALAN WATSON.

END - UNRECORDED

EX-115
60 JUN 14 1962 REC-28
82

WJ 157-4-28-A -
NOT RECORDED
199 JUN 4 1962
F112

WASHINGTON CAPITAL NEWS SERVICE

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Mr. Tolson
Mr. Nichols
Mr. Boardman
Mr. Belmont
Mr. Mohr
Mr. Parsons
Mr. Rosen
Mr. Tamm
Mr. Nease
Tele. Room
Mr. Holloman
Miss Gandy

Air of Uncertainty Surrounds State Sovereignty Commission

By JOHN HERBERS

United Press Staff Correspondent

A powerful new state agency, the Sovereignty Commission for maintaining segregation, is being organized under a cloud of uncertainty.

That is because nobody has ever done before what it has set out to do, and because it has such far-reaching and strange objectives.

The commission has committed itself to being a watchdog of the state's pattern of racial segregation, a legal advisor to the Legislature, a secret investigator to spy on integration forces, a strong legal arm against integration forces and a general investigating body.

There's nothing else like it anywhere and because of its newness commission members can't agree among themselves how certain objectives should be tackled.

To By-pass Court

The commission was authorized by the recent Legislature as a successor to the Legal Education Advisory Committee which mapped the state's network of laws to avoid enforcement of the Supreme Court's anti-segregation decisions.

But administration and legislative leaders, most of them now members of the commission, decided there should be an all-inclusive group to assert the state's sovereignty in compliance with its new interposition resolution and accompanying laws.

The commission was formed under Gov. J. P. Coleman and given \$250,000 to spend in the next two years.

To date the commission has hired an executive secretary, a chief investigator, a publicity man and secretarial help. It is looking around for a full-time attorney and other personnel.

Gore in Charge

As executive secretary, State Rep. Ney Gore will administer the show under policies established by the commission. He will travel outside the state when needed, acting as liaison with other states in the segregation fight.

Gore, however, was no sooner chosen than administration opponents

(See AIR on Page 2A)

SEGREGATION - MISSISSIPPI

THE STATE TIMES
JACKSON, MISS.
5/27/56
Page 1, Col. 2 & 3

OCT 2 1956

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SERIALIZED	FILED
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EX - 120

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NOT RECORDED
126 JUN 15 1956

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Air . . .

ents brought up charges Gore could not hold that job and be a legislator too. Coleman brushed off the charges as unfounded.

The commission wants a full-time attorney to work with the attorney general in court fights against suits filed on integration.

Members expect Negroes to file the first of such suits within the next few weeks but there has been nothing said about what the full-time attorney would do with his time if no suit is filed for several more months. At least one man who was offered the job rejected it.

Then comes the intelligence division to be headed by L. C. Hicks, present highway patrol chief. He has been voted authority to hire whatever secret investigators and informers Coleman thinks are needed to spy on the enemy and find out Negro plans for getting in what schools.

If the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People plan to file suit, Coleman said, the commission should know about it ahead of time. Then, when it happens, Hicks will send out his men to find out if any of the Negroes involved have violated any of the assortment of laws drawn up as another legal weapon against integration.

Backing up this plan is the Sovereignty Commission law giving the agency broad powers to subpoena witnesses and records, with fines and jail terms for those who violate the law.

Not the least of the commission's functions is its proposed advertising and publicity program, under direction of Editor Hal Decelle of Rolling Fork. A good share of the \$250,000 is expected to go for this phase of the program.

Mississippi will set out to show the nation that the state, as Coleman puts it, "doesn't fry Negroes and eat them for breakfast."

There is yet to be established a means of spreading this publicity, but the general idea seems to be to work through the smaller newspapers of the North and run any advertisements necessary to combat NAACP ads attacking the state.

Tolson ✓
 Nichols ✓
 Boardman ✓
 Belmont ✓
 Mason ✓
 Mohr ✓
 Parsons ✓
 Rosen ✓
 Tamm ✓
 Nease ✓
 Winterrowd ✓
 Tele. Room ✓
 Holloman ✓
 Gandy ✓

Mississippi Segregation Board Will Hire 'Spies'

JACKSON, Miss., May 16 (AP). — Mississippi's State Sovereignty Commission, watchdog of the State's rights, has voted to hire secret agents to serve as "eyes and ears" in the fight to keep segregation.

Along the same lines, the 12-member commission voted yesterday to spend State money to "buy information" about activities in the integration camp.

In another move, the commission hired a full-time publicity director to explain to integrationists Mississippi's position concerning segregation.

The action was part of what Gov. J. P. Coleman, commission chairman, labeled an attempt "to bring this commission into its full effect and fruition."

The commission was set up by the 1956 Legislature to prevent Federal "encroachment" on States' rights with the segregation question as the main objective.

In debating the issue of hiring undercover agents, the Sovereignty Commission agreed on secrecy because, among other reasons "it's possible we may want to hire a Negro" to spy on Negro activities within Mississippi.

Gov. Coleman called attention to the FBI's use of informants and said the SSC would operate in the same manner. He called the investigators and informants, known but to the commission,

"an official arm of State government."

The Governor cautioned the commission not to panic. "I see no reason for alarm, frustration or rutility," he said. "We have the ball and it's up to the opposition to take the initiative."

"After all, integration came about because the people gave up. We will not give up."

Wash. Post and Times Herald _____
 Wash. News _____
 Wash. Star A-3
 N. Y. Herald Tribune _____
 N. Y. Mirror _____
 N. Y. Daily News _____
 Daily Worker _____
 The Worker _____
 New Leader _____

Date MAY 16 1956

INDEXED - 20

EX-22

OCT 2 1956

NOT RECORDED
 117 MAY 20 1956

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62-101087-27-A

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(Mount Clipping in Space Below)

**MISSISSIPPI
NOTEBOOK**By **TOM ETHRIDGE****DO NOT DESTROY -
PENDING LITIGATION**

190-45-3

Odds And Ends From Our Mailbox-

Mr. Tom Ethridge
The Clarion-Ledger
Jackson, Mississippi
Dear Mr. Ethridge:

It was indeed a pleasure to read your column, "Behind The Headlines, Off The Cuff," in the August 7th edition of your paper.

I am pleased that you found my message in the August issue of the FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin worthy of being called to the attention of your many readers, and your kind comments are a source of encouragement.

I hope the work of this Bureau will continue to merit your support.

Sincerely yours,
J. EDGAR HOOVER
Director,
Federal Bureau of
Investigation
United States Department of Justice
Washington, D. C.

DEBASTED ANTHEM

Dear Mr. Ethridge:

... Like many other viewers, as we were watching the Democratic Convention on our living room TV, my wife and I were disturbed by the unusual rendition of the National Anthem. Never have we heard anything debased so callously...

We, my wife and myself, were brought up as Democrats... but cannot understand how delegates could applaud such a poor rendition of the Star Spangled Banner...

It should be sung from the heart, a heart-filled with pride, not jazzed in such a disrespectful manner...

JAMES M. EVANS SR.
3558 Ridgecrest Drive
Jackson, Miss. 39212

(Indicate page, name of newspaper, city and state.)

— Page 1

— The Clarion Ledger

— Jackson, Miss.

Date: Sept. 10, 1968

Edition: Home

Author:

Editor: T. M. Hederman

Title: Clarion-Ledger
Editorial

Character: 66-52

-or- 157-480

Classification: 80-197

Submitting Office: Jackson

☐ Being InvestigatedSEARCHED ~~YES~~ INDEXEDSERIALIZED ~~YES~~ FILED ~~YES~~

SEP 13 1968

FBI - JACKSON

Original 4/ce
to
Bureau

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(NOTE: We have had other letters, and some phone calls, criticizing the "jazzed-up" version of the Star Spangled Banner as sung at Fort Chicago by the Jazz singer who evidently was not too familiar with the words or true meaning.—T. E.)

TWO WILLIAMS

Dear Mr. Ethridge:

Really appreciate your

column on how Webb Burke, our new Sovereignty Commission Director, touched off the famous 1926 riot at Starkville when he kicked the extra point to give his Ole Miss team a 7 to 6 victory over old A&M. . .

As you said, Mr. Burke has what it takes to do a fine job in an important capacity.

By the way, you mentioned two great Mississippians who were Ole Miss partisans on the day of the 7 to 6 upset of the Starkville team for the first Ole Miss win over A & M in a "coon's age." Wish you'd do a column of tribute to each and both.

Was William Hollingsworth, the famous artist, a school mate of William Faulkner, the famous novelist at the University?

E. N. W.

Collins, Miss.

(NOTE: William Faulkner attended Ole Miss quite a few years before our boyhood friend William Hollingsworth, who was a good deal younger.—T. E.)

FOND MEMORIES

Dear Tom:

We want to thank you for the tribute to the late William Hollingsworth ("perhaps our greatest Mississippi artist"). . . We who were close to him and loved him deeply appreciate such a reference that helps keep his memory alive.

I am speaking for our Aunts Mary and Maggie Hollingsworth, 90 and 88 years respectively. My mother was a sister of William's father. . .

I am sure William enjoyed the Ole Miss victory you described. He had a most human side, and the after-game battle must have given him a thrill. I can remember how he sometimes wound up on Miss Lorena Duling's dreaded "Spanking Machine" at Davis Elementary School, which made me glad I went to Poindexter school.

Thank you for your ever enjoyable column and with kindest regards to you and your family.

JANE (LAMKIN) BRENT
Mrs. J. F. Brent
Box 246 Raymond
Mississippi, 39154.

December 30, 1970

Honorable Erle Johnston - 80248
Editor
Scott County Times
Forest, Mississippi 39074

Dear Mr. Johnston:

I have read your column, "Reminiscing with the editor," highlighting our Jackson Office, which appeared in the December 16th issue of your newspaper.

My associates and I deeply appreciate the interest which prompted your generous comments. We are grateful for your support and hope that our efforts will continue to merit your confidence and approval.

Sincerely yours,

J. Edgar Hoover

(1) - Jackson

Mailing Address:
State Sovereignty
Commission
P.O. Box 136
Jackson, 39205



June 15, 1972

CC-298
80-6-553
newspaper
Mr. Erle Johnston
Editor
Scott County Times
Forest, Mississippi 39074

Dear Mr. Johnston:

On behalf of my associates in the FBI, I would like to thank you for your editorial entitled "Hoover And His Bible" which appeared in the May 31st edition of your newspaper. Your very kind remarks mean a great deal to us as we endeavor to carry on the work to which Mr. Hoover dedicated his life.

Sincerely yours,

L. Patrick Gray III
L. Patrick Gray, III
Acting Director

① - Jackson

80-298-67

SEARCHED	INDEXED
SERIALIZED	FILED
JUN 17 1972	
FBI-JACKSON	

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(Mount Clipping in Space Below)

Sovereignty Commission Holds Status

Usual Intense Argument Precedes Funds Approval

By JAMES SAGGUS
Associated Press Writer

The controversial state Sovereignty Commission has won its annual vote of confidence in the Mississippi House despite charges the agency has outlived its usefulness.

Ignoring attacks by a vocal group which challenged it on several grounds Monday, the house voted 84-23 approval of a \$118,991 appropriation to fund its work in the next fiscal year. Rep. Edgar Stephens of New Albany, chairman of the House Appropriations Committee, carried the bill through charges that the commission no longer served a purpose.

WHAT IT DOES

The commission, which was set up two decades ago as a segregation watchdog, "is not doing what the statute says," Stephens agreed, but he said it is because it had abandoned its segregation activities several administrations ago. He also agreed that it was working in community relations, anti-subversive activities and intelligence on potential trouble spots, even though there is no statutory authority for it.

"It is filling a need that no one else fills and that's the reason it exists," Stephens said. In a recent weeks, he said, it "has been trying to find out what happened to parts and equipment which left state penitentiary for parts down."

The commission knew of the Republic of New Africa's efforts to settle in Mississippi before the RNA gained prominence, and helped local authorities make preparations to handle it.

ON COMMISSION

The commission is composed of the governor, a number of state officials and a large group of legislators.

Rep. Gerald Endris of Biloxi said the actions of the commission were "in violation of the law." Rep. Clarence Morgan of Kosciusko argued that "they make investigations into all kinds of things besides what you have been told—secret investigations..."

Rep. H. L. Merideth of Greenville said he felt that while the commission may have served a purpose considered useful in the past it is now "wasting \$118,000 in state money."

And Rep. Robert Clark of Ebenezer agreed "there are other things there's more need for now."

Rep. Betty Long of Meridian, formerly a member of the Sovereignty Commission, said if it

were abolished it should be done by direct action and not by being starved to death for lack of money.

"It has not outlived its usefulness," she said. "I wish it had."

Stephens said the services of the commission, including purchase of confidential information from tipsters, was available to any sheriff, and no other agency performed this function.

The bill was the only one of 15 routine House appropriations before representatives quit work until this afternoon.

OTHER ACTIONS

The House also:

—Amended and passed a Senate bill requiring signs indicating ownership of cars belonging to the state, a county or a city.

—Sent back to the Judiciary Committee a bill to tighten laws on licensing architects, a measure first scuttled by an amendment abolishing the proposal that an apprenticeship be required.

—Passed a bill to remove a 10 1/2 per cent limitation on Welfare Department administrative expenses, pegging it instead to the amount appropriated by the legislature for that purpose.

—Passed a series of Senate-approved bills raising fees for various hunting and fishing licenses.

—and passed a bill requiring county supervisors to advertise for each item of heavy equipment on which bids are sought.

(Indicate page, name of newspaper, city and state.)

PAGE 3

JACKSON DAILY NEWS

JACKSON, MISS.

Date: 3/13/73
Edition: HOME
Author:
Editor: JAMES M. WARD
Title: SOVEREIGNTY
COMMISSION

Character:

or

Classification: 157-480
Submitting Office JACKSON

☐ Being Investigated

SEARCHED

SERIALIZED

FBI-JACKSON

80-298-68

(Mount Clipping in Space Below)

Sovereignty Commission Holds Status

Usual Intense Argument Precedes Funds Approval

By JAMES SAGGUS
Associated Press Writer

The controversial state Sovereignty Commission has won its annual vote of confidence in the Mississippi House despite charges the agency has outlived its usefulness.

Ignoring attacks by a vocal group which challenged it on several grounds Monday, the house voted 84-29 approval of a \$118,991 appropriation to fund its work in the next fiscal year. Rep. Edgar Stephens of New Albany, chairman of the House Appropriations Committee, carried the bill through charges that the commission no longer served a purpose.

WHAT IT DOES

The commission, which was set up two decades ago as a segregation watchdog, "is not doing what the statute says," Stephens agreed, but he said it is because it had abandoned its segregation activities several administrations ago.

He also agreed that it was working in community relations, anti-subversive activities and intelligence on potential trouble spots, even though there is no statutory authority for it.

It is filling a need that no one fills and that's the reason it exists," Stephens said. "In recent weeks, he said, it has been trying to find out what happened to parts and equipment which left state penitentiary for parts town."

The commission knew of the Republic of New Africa's efforts to settle in Mississippi before the RNA gained prominence, and helped local authorities make preparations to handle it.

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Rep. H. L. Merideth of Greenville said he felt that while the commission may have served a purpose considered useful in the past it is now "wasting \$118,000 in state money."

And Rep. Robert Clark of Ebenezer agreed "there are other things there's more need for now."

Rep. Betty Long of Meridian, formerly a member of the Sovereignty Commission, said if it

were abolished, it should be done by direct action and not by being starved to death for lack of money.

"It has not outlived its usefulness," she said. "I wish it had."

Stephens said the services of the commission, including purchase of confidential information from tipsters, was available to any sheriff, and no other agency performed this function.

The bill was the only one of 15 routine House appropriations before representatives quit work until this afternoon.

OTHER ACTIONS

The House also:

—Amended and passed a Senate bill requiring signs indicating ownership of cars belonging to the state, a county or a city.

—Sent back to the Judiciary "A" Committee a bill to tighten laws on licensing architects, a measure first scuttled by an amendment abolishing the proposal that an apprenticeship be required.

—Passed a bill to remove a 10 1/2 per cent limitation on Welfare Department administrative expenses, pegging it instead to the amount appropriated by the legislature for that purpose.

—Passed a series of Senate-approved bills raising fees for various hunting and fishing licenses.

—and passed a bill requiring county supervisors to advertise for each item of heavy equipment on which bids are sought.

(Indicate page, name of newspaper, city and state.)

PAGE 3

JACKSON DAILY NEWS

JACKSON, MISS.

Date: 3/13/73
Edition: HOME
Author:
Editor: JAMES M. WARD
Title: SOVEREIGNTY
COMMISSION

Character: *WIK* 80-218
or *WIT* 157-180
Classification:
Submitting Office JACKSON

☐ Being Investigated

SEARCHED INDEXED
SERIALIZED FILED
MAR 1 1973
FBI-JACKSON

80-298-69

(Mount Clipping in Space Below)

State Agency

Ends June 30

By THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

State Sovereignty Commission members expressed hope at a closed-door session Thursday that the 1974 legislature will override Gov. Bill Waller and provide it with operating funds.

Commission members met in the absence of Waller, who vetoed the agency's \$118,000 appropriation after the 1973 session ended.

Atty. Gen. A. F. Summer, a member and supporter of the commission, told members the next session will have three days to override the veto.

Summer said he felt "chances are good" for overriding the veto, which he said

left the state without any information-gathering agency in the interim. Although the 12-member commission can continue meeting, he said, there will be no funds for a staff or commission expenses when the present appropriation expires June 30.

Former FBI man Webb Burke, 67-year-old director of the agency, said he had "no plans whatsoever" for next month. He said he would close down the office because "I don't think we could work for six months without pay."

When Waller vetoed the sovereignty commission appropriation, he said that it "performs no real indispensable services to the people of the state. (The veto) will add economy in state government and dispose of one state agency which is no longer needed."

The commission was set up two decades ago as a segregation watchdog agency. With the steady stream of integration decisions by federal courts, however, its work shifted to the investigative and community relations fields.

The agency employs three field investigators and two secretaries. It has no arrest powers and investigators are not permitted to carry firearms.

Burke said when he closes the office, the files should be stored for safekeeping. Files are closed to all but commission members and the agency has not discussed its work openly.

In lamenting the shutdown, Summer said, "The state does not have any information-gathering agency for its own protection against those who would seek to undermine the state's sovereignty and, to this extent, the agency has been helpful in keeping the governor and other state officials informed on matters that could affect the state adversely."

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(Indicate page, name of newspaper, city and state.)

PAGE 1

JACKSON DAILY NEWS

JACKSON, MISS.

Original to Bureau

Date: 6/8/73

Edition: HOME

Author:

Editor: JAMES M. WARD

Title: STATE SOVEREIGNTY COMMISSION

Character:

or

Classification: 80-298-70

Submitting Office: JACKSON

☐ Being Investigated

F. O. I. A.

11/83

(Mount Clipping in Space Below)

Cox to consider opening segregation agency papers

U.S. District Judge Harold Cox agreed Friday to consider a motion that more than 500 documents of the now-defunct State Sovereignty Commission be opened for use in a lawsuit. 157-480 *over info*

The American Civil Liberties Union, which filed the lawsuit in 1977, maintains it needs the documents to prove that the commission illegally spied on thousands of persons between 1953 and 1973.

The commission was the state's segregation watchdog agency during the 1950s and 1960s.

The ACLU has asked Cox to order Gov. Cliff Finch to review the commission's files and determine which ones are essential to the current operations of the state.

The group is arguing that under federal law the only files the state can claim are privileged — meaning they should be kept sealed — are those necessary to the current operations of the state.

The ACLU argues that Finch is the only person who can determine which ones are essential to the operation of the state because as chief executive, he controls state agencies.

In 1977 the Legislature ordered the commission's files sealed for 50 years. The Sovereignty Commission was last funded in 1973.

Attorneys for the state contend the files should be kept sealed and not used in the ACLU's suit because the reputations of many individuals would be "smeared" if they are released.

They also contend that the Legislature

sealed the records for 50 years in 1977 and the federal court can't order them opened.

In addition, attorneys for the state argue the files are protected by governmental privilege because they contain inter- and intra-governmental memos and reports from informers.

Before Cox agreed to take the ACLU's motion under advisement, he first established that the ACLU's attorney was not from Wisconsin.

"Folks up north put their foot down hard on Southerners, especially in Mississippi," Cox told ACLU attorney Christopher R. Kelley just after the hearing began.

"There were a whole lot of things said and done when we didn't know any better," he said.

Cox said the Mississippi Legislature has determined the files of the Sovereignty

Commission should be sealed. He said he is not sure the question of whether they should be opened is a matter for the federal courts to decide.

He then questioned Kelley's origins.

"I don't know where you're from — Wisconsin or some sea port," Cox asked Kelley.

"Gulfport is a seaport, your honor," Kelley said.

"How long have you lived there? Fifteen minutes?"

"I graduated from high school there," Kelley, who once worked with the Minnesota Attorney General's office before moving back to Mississippi, said.

Cox then heard Kelley's arguments that the state's claims that the documents sought are privileged and should remain

(Indicate page, name of newspaper, city and state.)

PAGE 3A

CLARION LEDGER

JACKSON, MS.

*Original
to Bureau*

Date: 3/10/79
Edition: HOME

Title:

Character:

or

Classification: 80-298-71
Submitting Office: JACKSON

MAR 14 1979

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IN Sub file - serials 1 through 40

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JN serials 2, 3

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IN serials 6, 7, 8

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IN serials 10 through 16

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FOIPA DELETED PAGE INFORMATION SHEET4

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Section 552Section 552a☐ (b)(1)☐ (b)(7)(A)☐ (d)(5)☒ (b)(2)☐ (b)(7)(B)☐ (j)(2)☐ (b)(3)☐ (b)(7)(C)☐ (k)(1)☒ (b)(7)(D)☐ (k)(2)☐ (b)(7)(E)☐ (k)(3)☐ (b)(7)(F)☐ (k)(4)☐ (b)(4)☐ (b)(8)☐ (k)(5)☐ (b)(5)☐ (b)(9)☐ (k)(6)☐ (b)(6)☐ (k)(7)

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IN serials 18, 19, 20

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6 Page(s) withheld entirely at this location in the file. One or more of the following statements, where indicated, explain this deletion.

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Section 552Section 552a☐ (b)(1)☐ (b)(7)(A)☐ (d)(5)☐ (b)(2)☐ (b)(7)(B)☐ (j)(2)☐ (b)(3)☐ (b)(7)(C)☐ (k)(1)☒ (b)(7)(D)☐ (k)(2)☐ (b)(7)(E)☐ (k)(3)☐ (b)(7)(F)☐ (k)(4)☐ (b)(4)☐ (b)(8)☐ (k)(5)☐ (b)(5)☐ (b)(9)☐ (k)(6)☐ (b)(6)☐ (k)(7)

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SN serials 22 through 27

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Section 552Section 552a☐ (b)(1)☐ (b)(7)(A)☐ (d)(5)☐ (b)(2)☐ (b)(7)(B)☐ (j)(2)☐ (b)(3)☐ (b)(7)(C)☐ (k)(1)☒ (b)(7)(D)☐ (k)(2)☐ (b)(7)(E)☐ (k)(3)☐ (b)(7)(F)☐ (k)(4)☐ (b)(4)☐ (b)(8)☐ (k)(5)☐ (b)(5)☐ (b)(9)☐ (k)(6)☐ (b)(6)☐ (k)(7)

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- ☒ The following number is to be used for reference regarding these pages:

SN serial 79

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Section 552Section 552a☐ (b)(1)☐ (b)(7)(A)☐ (d)(5)☐ (b)(2)☐ (b)(7)(B)☐ (j)(2)☐ (b)(3)☐ (b)(7)(C)☐ (k)(1)☒ (b)(7)(D)☐ (k)(2)☐ (b)(7)(E)☐ (k)(3)☐ (b)(7)(F)☐ (k)(4)☐ (b)(4)☐ (b)(8)☐ (k)(5)☐ (b)(5)☐ (b)(9)☐ (k)(6)☐ (b)(6)☐ (k)(7)

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JN serials 31, 32, 33

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Section 552Section 552a☐ (b)(1)☐ (b)(7)(A)☐ (d)(5)☐ (b)(2)☐ (b)(7)(B)☐ (j)(2)☐ (b)(3)☐ (b)(7)(C)☐ (k)(1)☒ (b)(7)(D)☐ (k)(2)☐ (b)(7)(E)☐ (k)(3)☐ (b)(7)(F)☐ (k)(4)☐ (b)(4)☐ (b)(8)☐ (k)(5)☐ (b)(5)☐ (b)(9)☐ (k)(6)☐ (b)(6)☐ (k)(7)

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Serial 34 (p. 4)

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7 Page(s) withheld entirely at this location in the file. One or more of the following statements, where indicated, explain this deletion.

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JN serials 35 through 38

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FOIPA DELETED PAGE INFORMATION SHEET13 Page(s) withheld entirely at this location in the file. One or more of the following statements, where indicated, explain this deletion.

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Section 552Section 552a☐ (b)(1)☐ (b)(7)(A)☐ (d)(5)☐ (b)(2)☐ (b)(7)(B)☐ (j)(2)☐ (b)(3)☐ (b)(7)(C)☐ (k)(1)☒ (b)(7)(D)☐ (k)(2)☐ (b)(7)(E)☐ (k)(3)☐ (b)(7)(F)☐ (k)(4)☐ (b)(4)☐ (b)(8)☐ (k)(5)☐ (b)(5)☐ (b)(9)☐ (k)(6)☐ (b)(6)☐ (k)(7)

- ☐ Information pertained only to a third party with no reference to you or the subject of your request.
- ☐ Information pertained only to a third party. Your name is listed in the title only.
- ☐ Documents originated with another Government agency(ies). These documents were referred to that agency(ies) for review and direct response to you.

Pages contain information furnished by another Government agency(ies). You will be advised by the FBI as to the releasability of this information following our consultation with the other agency(ies).

Page(s) withheld for the following reason(s):

☐ For your information:

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- The following number is to be used for reference regarding these pages:

JN serials 40 through 47

XXXXXX
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X NO DUPLICATION FEE X
X FOR THIS PAGE X
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XXXXXXFEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION
FOIPA DELETED PAGE INFORMATION SHEET4 Page(s) withheld entirely at this location in the file. One or more of the following statements, where indicated, explain this deletion.☒ Deletions were made pursuant to the exemptions indicated below with no segregable material available for release to you.Section 552Section 552a☐ (b)(1)☐ (b)(7)(A)☐ (d)(5)☐ (b)(2)☐ (b)(7)(B)☐ (j)(2)☐ (b)(3)☐ (b)(7)(C)☐ (k)(1)☒ (b)(7)(D)☐ (k)(2)☐ (b)(7)(E)☐ (k)(3)☐ (b)(7)(F)☐ (k)(4)☐ (b)(4)☐ (b)(8)☐ (k)(5)☐ (b)(5)☐ (b)(9)☐ (k)(6)☐ (b)(6)☐ (k)(7)☐ Information pertained only to a third party with no reference to you or the subject of your request.☐ Information pertained only to a third party. Your name is listed in the title only.☐ Documents originated with another Government agency(ies). These documents were referred to that agency(ies) for review and direct response to you.

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Page(s) withheld for the following reason(s):

☐ For your information:☒ The following number is to be used for reference regarding these pages:JN serials 49, 50XXXXXX
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(Mount Clipping in Space Below)

**MISSISSIPPI
NOTEBOOK**By **TOM ETHRIDGE****DO NOT DESTROY -
PENDING LITIGATION**

190-45-3

Odds And Ends From Our Mailbox-

Mr. Tom Ethridge
The Clarion-Ledger
Jackson, Mississippi
Dear Mr. Ethridge:

It was indeed a pleasure to read your column, "Behind The Headlines, Off The Cuff," in the August 7th edition of your paper.

I am pleased that you found my message in the August issue of the FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin worthy of being called to the attention of your many readers, and your kind comments are a source of encouragement.

I hope the work of this Bureau will continue to merit your support.

Sincerely yours,
J. EDGAR HOOVER
Director,
Federal Bureau of
Investigation
United States Department of Justice
Washington, D. C.

DEBASTED ANTHEM

Dear Mr. Ethridge:

... Like many other viewers, as we were watching the Democratic Convention on our living room TV, my wife and I were disturbed by the unusual rendition of the National Anthem. Never have we heard anything debased so callously. . .

We, my wife and myself, were brought up as Democrats . . . but cannot understand how delegates could applaud such a poor rendition of the Star Spangled Banner. . . .

It should be sung from the heart, a heart-filled with pride, not jazzed in such a disrespectful manner. . . .

JAMES M. EVANS SR.
3558 Ridgecrest Drive
Jackson, Miss. 39212

(Indicate page, name of newspaper, city and state.)

Page 1

The Clarion Ledger

Jackson, Miss.

Date: Sept. 10, 1968
Edition: Home
Author:
Editor: T. M. Hederman
Title: Clarion-Ledger Editorial

Character: 66-52
or 157-480
Classification: 80-197
Submitting Office: Jackson

☐ Being Investigated

SEARCHED INDEXED

SERIALIZED FILED

SEP 10 1968

FBI - JACKSON

*Original to
Susan*

(NOTE: We have had other letters, and some phone calls, criticizing the "jazzed-up" version of the Star Spangled Banner as sung at Fort Chicago by the Jazz singer who evidently was not too familiar with the words or true meaning.—T. E.)

TWO WILLIAMS

Dear Mr. Ethridge:

Really appreciate your column on Now Webb Burke, our new Sovereignty Commission Director, touched off the famous 1926 riot at Starkville when he kicked the extra point to give his Ole Miss team a 7 to 6 victory over old A&M. . .

As you said, Mr. Burke has what it takes to do a fine job in an important capacity.

By the way, you mentioned two great Mississippians who were Ole Miss partisans on the day of the 7 to 6 upset of the Starkville team for the first Ole Miss win over A & M in a "coon's age." Wish you'd do a column of tribute to each and both.

Was William Hollingsworth, the famous artist, a school mate of William Faulkner, the famous novelist at the University?

E. N. W.

Collins, Miss.

(NOTE: William Faulkner attended Ole Miss quite a few years before our boyhood friend William Hollingsworth, who was a good deal younger.—T. E.).

FOND MEMORIES

Dear Tom:

We want to thank you for the tribute to the late William Hollingsworth ("perhaps our greatest Mississippi artist"). . . We who were close to him and loved him deeply appreciate such a reference that helps keep his memory alive.

I am speaking for our Aunts Mary and Maggie Hollingsworth, 90 and 88 years respectively. My mother was a sister of William's father. . .

I am sure William enjoyed the Ole Miss victory you described. He had a most human side, and the after-game battle must have given him a thrill. I can remember how he sometimes wound up on Miss Lorena Duling's dreaded "Spanking Machine" at Davis Elementary School, which made me glad I went to Poindexter school.

Thank you for your ever enjoyable column and with kindest regards to you and your family.

JANE (LAMKIN) BRENT
Mrs. J. F. Brent
Box 246 Raymond
Mississippi, 39154.

December 30, 1970

Honorable Eric Johnston - 80-298
Editor
Scott County Times
Forest, Mississippi 39074

Dear Mr. Johnston:

I have read your column, "Reminiscing with the editor," highlighting our Jackson Office, which appeared in the December 16th issue of your newspaper.

My associates and I deeply appreciate the interest which prompted your generous comments. We are grateful for your support and hope that our efforts will continue to merit your confidence and approval.

Sincerely yours,

J. Edgar Hoover

① - Jackson

*Mailing 11/15/71
State Sovereignty
Commission
P.O. Box 136
Jackson 39205*

80-298-66

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SERIALIZED	FILED
JAN 2 1971	
FBI - JACKSON	
SAC	

(66)

June 15, 1972

Mr. Erle Johnston
Editor
Scott County Times
Forest, Mississippi 39074

80-298
80-b-555
mem. other ref.

Dear Mr. Johnston:

On behalf of my associates in the FBI, I would like to thank you for your editorial entitled "Hoover And His Bible" which appeared in the May 31st edition of your newspaper. Your very kind remarks mean a great deal to us as we endeavor to carry on the work to which Mr. Hoover dedicated his life.

Sincerely yours,

L. Patrick Gray III
L. Patrick Gray, III
Acting Director

① - Jackson

80-298-67

SEARCHED <i>h</i>	INDEXED <i>h</i>
SERIALIZED <i>h</i>	FILED <i>h</i>
JUN 17 1972	
FBI-JACKSON	

298 38 412 58

(Mount Clipping in Space Below)

Sovereignty Commission Holds Status

Usual Intense Argument Precedes Funds Approval

By JAMES SAGGUS
Associated Press Writer

The controversial state Sovereignty Commission has won its annual vote of confidence in the Mississippi House despite charges the agency has outlived its usefulness.

Ignoring attacks by a vocal group which challenged it on several grounds Monday, the House voted 84-29 approval of a \$118,991 appropriation to fund its work in the next fiscal year.

Rep. Edgar Stephens of New Albany, chairman of the House Appropriations Committee, steered the bill through charges that the commission no longer served a purpose.

WHAT IT DOES

The commission, which was set up two decades ago as a segregation watchdog, "is not doing what the statute says," Stephens agreed, but he said it was because it had abandoned pro-segregation activities several administrations ago.

He also agreed that it was working in community relations, anti-subversive activities and intelligence on potential trouble spots, even though there was no statutory authority for this.

"It is filling a need that no agency fills and that's the reason it exists," Stephens said.

In recent weeks, he said, it has been trying to find out what happened to parts and fuel and equipment which left the state penitentiary for parts unknown.

The commission knew of the Republic of New Africa's efforts to settle in Mississippi before the RNA gained prominence, and helped local authorities make preparations to handle it.

ON COMMISSION

The commission is composed of the governor, a number of state officials and a large group of legislators.

Rep. Gerald Endris of Biloxi said the actions of the commission were "in violation of the law." Rep. Clarence Morgan of Kosciusko argued that "they make investigations into all kinds of things besides what you have been told—secret investigations..."

Rep. H. L. Merideth of Greenville said he felt that while the commission may have served a purpose considered useful in the past it is now "wasting \$118,000 in state money."

And Rep. Robert Clark of Ebenezer agreed "there are other things there's more need for now."

Rep. Betty Long of Meridian, formerly a member of the Sovereignty Commission, said if it

were abolished it should be done by direct action and not by being starved to death for lack of money.

"It has not outlived its usefulness," she said. "I wish it had."

Stephens said the services of the commission, including purchase of confidential information from tipsters, was available to any sheriff, and no other agency performed this function.

The bill was the only one of 15 routine House appropriations before representatives quit work until this afternoon.

OTHER ACTIONS

The House also:

—Amended and passed a Senate bill requiring signs indicating ownership of cars belonging to the state, a county or a city.

—Sent back to the Judiciary "A" Committee a bill to tighten laws on licensing architects, a measure first scuttled by an amendment abolishing the proposal that an apprenticeship be required.

—Passed a bill to remove a 10½ per cent limitation on Welfare Department administrative expenses, pegging it instead to the amount appropriated by the legislature for that purpose.

—Passed a series of Senate-approved bills raising fees for various hunting and fishing licenses.

—and passed a bill requiring county supervisors to advertise for each item of heavy equipment on which bids are sought.

(Indicate page, name of newspaper, city and state.)

PAGE 3

JACKSON DAILY NEWS

JACKSON, MISS.

Date: 3/13/73
Edition: HOME
Author:
Editor: JAMES M. WARD
Title: SOVEREIGNTY
COMMISSION

Character:

or

Classification: 157-480
Submitting Office JACKSON

☐ Being Investigated

SEARCHED	INDEXED
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FBI-JACKSON	

80-298-68

(Mount Clipping in Space Below)

Cox to consider opening segregation agency papers

U.S. District Judge Harold Cox agreed Friday to consider a motion that more than 500 documents of the now-defunct State Sovereignty Commission be opened for use in a lawsuit. 157-980 *over info 20*

The American Civil Liberties Union, which filed the lawsuit in 1977, maintains it needs the documents to prove that the commission illegally spied on thousands of persons between 1953 and 1973.

The commission was the state's segregation watchdog agency during the 1950s and 1960s.

The ACLU has asked Cox to order Gov. Cliff Finch to review the commission's files and determine which ones are essential to the current operations of the state.

The group is arguing that under federal law the only files the state can claim are privileged — meaning they should be kept sealed — are those necessary to the current operations of the state.

The ACLU argues that Finch is the only person who can determine which ones are essential to the operation of the state because as chief executive, he controls state agencies.

In 1977 the Legislature ordered the commission's files sealed for 50 years. The Sovereignty Commission was last funded in 1973.

Attorneys for the state contend the files should be kept sealed and not used in the ACLU's suit because the reputations of many individuals would be "smeared" if they are released.

They also contend that the Legislature

sealed the records for 50 years in 1977 and the federal court can't order them opened.

In addition, attorneys for the state argue the files are protected by governmental privilege because they contain inter- and intra-governmental memos and reports from informers.

Before Cox agreed to take the ACLU's motion under advisement, he first established that the ACLU's attorney was not from Wisconsin.

"Folks up north put their foot down hard on Southerners, especially in Mississippi," Cox told ACLU attorney Christopher R. Kelley just after the hearing began.

"There were a whole lot of things said and done when we didn't know any better," he said.

Cox said the Mississippi Legislature has determined the files of the Sovereignty

Commission should be sealed. He said he is not sure the question of whether they should be opened is a matter for the federal courts to decide.

He then questioned Kelley's origins.

"I don't know where you're from — Wisconsin or some sea port," Cox asked Kelley.

"Gulfport is a seaport, your honor," Kelley said.

"How long have you lived there? Fifteen minutes?"

"I graduated from high school there," Kelley, who once worked with the Minnesota Attorney General's office before moving back to Mississippi, said.

Cox then heard Kelley's arguments that the state's claims that the documents sought are privileged and should remain

(Indicate page, name of newspaper, city and state.)

PAGE 3A

CLARION LEDGER

JACKSON, MS.

*Original
to Bureau*

Date: 3/10/79
Edition: HOME

Title:

Character:

or

Classification: 80-298-71
Submitting Office: JACKSON

MAR 14 1979

FBI/DOJ #